

5th Annual Texas Motorcycle Safety Fourm



**February 11, 2010
Austin, Texas**

FIFTH ANNUAL TEXAS MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FORUM

Executive Summary

Prepared by

Stacey Schrank
Assistant Research Scientist

and

Patricia Turner
Research Scientist

September 2010



Texas Transportation Institute
The Texas A&M University System
College Station, TX 77843



FORUM BACKGROUND

The Fifth Annual Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum held in Austin, Texas, on February 11, 2010, attracted more than 100 participants dedicated to reducing the number of motorcyclist fatalities and injuries on Texas roadways. Riders, researchers, motorcycle training instructors, and educators attended the Forum, along with members of law enforcement, public health, and government agencies. The Forum offered an opportunity for participants to identify current motorcycle safety issues, discuss the impact of existing programs and strategies, and formulate new strategies to aid in the reduction of motorcycle crashes.

Attendees of the one-day event heard a diverse group of speakers, with brief question-answer sessions following each presentation. Presenters shared information about the impact of Senate Bill 1967; the Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS) Motorcycle Operator Training and Safety Program; Texas Safe Communities approach to improving traffic safety; motorcycle safety in the military; law enforcement initiatives; public information and awareness campaigns to promote motorcycle safety; and the activities of the Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition (TMSC). An agenda is included in the Appendix A.

The Forum is co-sponsored by the Texas Transportation Institute's (TTI's) Center for Transportation Safety (CTS), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), TxDPS, and TMSC. The sponsors express their gratitude to Laurie Watson, vice-president of Brown Distributing, for the use of Brown's facility and to Lindsey Bradley, marketing and social responsibility director of Brown Distributing, for her help in preparing the venue and providing on-site assistance throughout the Forum.

OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Quinn Brackett, senior research scientist at CTS, opened the Forum by welcoming participants to the Fifth Annual Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum and expressing his appreciation to those that worked tirelessly to organize this year's event. Dr. Brackett thanked the attendees for their commitment to improving motorcycle safety in Texas and noted that many of the current efforts to reduce motorcyclist fatalities can be directly attributed to discussions held at previous Forums. He emphasized that Texas is experiencing a tremendous increase in both motorcycle fatalities and





injuries, far surpassing the number of registrations. Dr. Brackett stressed that a continued coordinated effort among state agencies, law enforcement, educators, and rider groups is essential to reversing the current trend and reducing the number of motorcyclists killed or injured on Texas roads.

Mr. Terry Pence, director of the Traffic Safety Section of TxDOT, began by thanking everyone for taking time out of their schedules to attend the Forum, and he extended his gratitude to those who organized the event. Mr. Pence expressed his excitement at the how the Forum has evolved from a small group meeting in a TxDOT conference room to the large group in attendance this year. He emphasized that many of the



motorcycle safety efforts underway resulted from previous Forums. He shared that discussions at an early Forum led to the development of the “Share the Road” decal program, and that there are now thousands of those decals on the back of the “Watch for Ice on Bridge” signs across the state. He pointed out that the use of TxDOT’s dynamic message signs to display “Look Twice for Motorcycles” and “Share the Road” messages during motorcycle events and rallies was a direct result of Forum discussions. Additionally, Mr. Pence acknowledged that the formation of TMSC evolved from the Forum. He discussed the alarming trends in motorcycle fatalities seen in Texas and across the nation. He shared that in 2008 there were 529 motorcycle fatalities compared to 349 in 2006. He mentioned that motorcycle fatalities accounted for 15.3% of all traffic-related fatalities in 2008, up from 10% just two years prior. Mr. Pence emphasized the continuing need to address this problem and offered his appreciation to those in attendance for being part of the effort. He closed by reiterating that the Forum is great way to share information, exchange ideas, and get direction on where to go in the future.

SB 1967: Motorcycle Safety Bill

Ms. Terri Williams, secretary for Texas Motorcycle Rights Association (TMRA2), provided an overview of Senate Bill 1967, which took effect on September 1, 2009. She stated that the bill was designed to significantly reduce motorcycle fatalities and injuries in Texas. Ms. Williams noted that representatives from various agencies including TxDPSS, TxDOT, Texas Education Agency (TEA), TMRA2, the U.S. Defenders, and members of Senator John J. Carona’s staff spent four days negotiating the details of the bill. She emphasized that the creation and passage



of SB 1967 was a direct result of many interested groups working together to improve motorcycle safety in Texas. She explained to the participants that working a bill at the Capitol is a long process involving multiple visits to each congressman and senator to ensure that each legislator reads and understands the bill and, most importantly, supports the bill. Next, Ms. Williams summarized each of the seven major provisions of SB 1967. She stressed that this is the most comprehensive motorcycle safety bill in the country and reported that groups in other states hope to pattern their legislation after SB 1967. She reiterated that the passage of this bill would not have been possible without state agencies and rider groups working together. She emphasized that the Forum is a great way to present and discuss ideas that help make a real difference in motorcycle safety in Texas.



Motorcycle Safety Training Update



Ms. Cindy Flores, training specialist for the TxDPS Motorcycle Safety Unit, presented information about the Motorcycle Operator Training and Safety Program. Ms. Flores briefly talked about the bills in the 81st Legislative session that affected motorcyclists. Since SB 1967 was discussed by an earlier speaker, she recapped only a few major points of the bill. She informed attendees that the passage of House Bill 4449 requires all motorcycle passengers to be at least five years of age. She mentioned that SB 506, a bill to allow lane splitting, did not pass, nor did SB 488, which would have recognized motorcyclists as vulnerable road users. Ms. Flores asked TxDPS Chief Inspector Jude Schexnyder to provide an update on the program's funding. Mr. Schexnyder expressed his gratitude to the Confederation of Clubs and Sputnik for their hard work to restore dedicated funding to the Motorcycle Operator Training and Safety Program. He noted that for the past couple of years the funding had been redirected for other purposes. Mr. Schexnyder stated that the program had been appropriated \$930,351, but he was uncertain what the actual budget would be or if the appropriated amount would be affected by the Governor Perry's budget cuts. Ms. Flores noted that 25 more training sites have been added since 2009 and 4 more applications are pending. She mentioned that with the new licensing requirements set forth by SB 1967, the additional training sites and ridercoaches will be beneficial. She stated that although the number of students trained in 2009 dipped slightly, the number is expected to increase this year due to SB 1967. When



asked about training for three-wheeled bikes, Ms. Flores responded that a three-wheeled basic rider course would be offered soon. She noted that there are currently three trike training courses listed on the TxDPS website, along with instructions for receiving the completion card needed by the Driver License Office to meet the Class M requirement. Ms. Flores added that during the next legislative session the wording on SB 1967 will be changed to clarify that any TxDPS-approved motorcycle training course, including those for three-wheeled motorcycles, will be accepted.

TxDOT's "Share the Road" Decal Program

Mr. Gonzalo Ponce, TxDOT's Motorcycle Safety Program manager, listed the traffic safety representatives at the federal and state levels and recognized organizations as partners in the motorcycle safety program. Mr. Ponce noted that while the 2009 crash data would not be finalized until June, the preliminary numbers appeared to indicate a decrease in both motorcyclist fatalities and injuries. He stated that the current fatality total for



2009 is 414 compared to 529 in 2008 and the current total for injuries in 2009 is 5,846 compared to 6,986 in 2008. He emphasized that TxDOT's goal is to reduce fatalities and injuries by increasing rider education and training, increasing enforcement of the existing helmet law for riders and passengers under the age of 21, and improving public information and education (PI&E) campaigns. He highlighted PI&E campaigns including "Look. Learn. Live.", "Share the Road", and "Take the Time, Take the Course." There are three motorcycle safety projects funded for FY2010. Mr. Ponce pointed out that since 2007 over 16,000 "Share the Road" decals have been shipped to the TxDOT district offices, but he did not have records of how many had actually been installed.



Motorcycle Safety and Awareness



Butterfly, state safety and awareness liaison for the Texas Confederation of Clubs and Independents (TCoC&I), highlighted the club's efforts to promote motorcycle safety and awareness across the state. She stressed that while TCoC&I does not have a lot of funding, it does have a vast supply of manpower that is more than willing to help with various motorcycle safety projects. Butterfly explained that each year riders work very hard to obtain proclamations recognizing

motorcycle safety and awareness month in cities and counties across the state. These proclamations often receive newspaper coverage that serves to get out the message to drivers in the area to watch for motorcycles. In 2009, the TCoC&I obtained proclamations from 132 cities and 14 counties. Each of the nine TCoC&I regions has a safety and awareness coordinator that works with outpost coordinators to distribute motorcycle safety materials supplied by TxDOT. Butterfly told attendees that TCoC&I works with each TxDOT district to get the "Share the Road" decals installed, but they have encountered some districts with little knowledge of the decals. She suggested that a memo to all the TxDOT districts regarding installation of the decals would be beneficial to safety efforts. Butterfly shared that TCoC&I designed yard signs with the "Share the Road" message to distribute to riders across the state and appealed to organizations in attendance to help with funding for this project.

Update on Statewide Motorcyclist Safety and Awareness Campaign

Ms. Patricia Turner, research scientist at TTI's Center for Transportation Safety, provided an overview of the motorcycle safety and awareness campaign being conducted by TTI. Ms. Turner emphasized that the "Look.Learn.Live." website is a great tool for sharing motorcycle safety information. She noted that safety information for riders and motorists are available and the website also houses a section dedicated to sharing information about the activities of the TMSC. Several broadcast-quality radio and television public service announcements (PSAs) are also available for downloading. Patricia explained that in conjunction with International Ride to Work Day in June 2009, the "Look Twice for Motorcycle" campaign was launched to encourage motorists to look





for motorcycles while driving and share the road safely. The campaign was promoted via billboards, transit bus wraps, radio and television PSAs, and by distributing educational information at public events. Ms. Turner shared that the campaign PSAs were aired on almost 150 stations across the state. She shared information about other TxDOT-funded motorcycle safety grants, such as statewide coordination of motorcycle safety initiatives, which supports the activities of the TMSC and Board and the annual Forum. Ms. Turner noted that TTI is working on a new training curriculum for law enforcement to increase awareness of motorcycle safety and enforcement about motorcycle-related traffic laws. Patricia announced that “Drink.Ride.Lose.” – an impaired rider campaign – is set to be launched later this year and asked those who may be interested in sharing how drinking and riding has impacted their lives should contact her.

Working with Your Safe Community Coalition to Improve Motorcycle Safety

Ms. Irene Rodriguez, associate research scientist at TTI’s Center for Transportation Safety, shared information about the Texas Safe Communities program established to provide support for the implementation of traffic safety programs in local communities. Ms. Rodriguez explained that safe communities are defined by four major characteristics: (1) injury data



analysis and data linkage, (2) partnerships with health care providers and businesses, (3) citizen involvement, and (4) integrated and comprehensive injury control systems. She stressed the importance of coordinating efforts with existing safety and prevention initiatives regardless of the primary topic, and encouraged attendees to partner with coalitions that may already exist in their local areas. Ms. Rodriguez stated that the Safe Communities model, established by the National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration, outlines strategies for successful program implementation in various traffic safety areas including motorcycle safety. She emphasized the importance of sustaining and expanding coalitions that do good work in their communities, and noted that maintaining funding is vital to a coalition’s success. Ms. Rodriguez mentioned that the Texas Safe Communities website will soon be launched, and will provide coalitions with the valuable resources needed for planning, developing, and implementing initiatives. The website will offer instructions to aid coalitions in applying directly to TxDOT for funding.



Combating Motorcyclist Deaths: A Top Priority for the Military

Steelworker 1st Class Erin Watson, Naval Motorcycle Safety Program of the United States Safety Program, delivered an informative presentation regarding motorcycle safety in the military. Ms. Watson shared with the group that in 2008 more military fatalities were caused by motorcycle crashes than by enemy fire. She explained that many soldiers choose to purchase a motorcycle with their bonus pay after returning from overseas because it's cheaper than buying a car and is perceived to be a "cooler" option. For many soldiers, the decision to ride constitutes an effort to replace the excitement and adrenaline rush they experienced during combat. SFC Watson noted that most entry-level motorcycle riders in the military are young, single males who have been in the military between two and four years, and they tend to have a risk-taking attitude. These riders often purchase motorcycles that are bigger and faster than their riding ability and experience dictates, and typically do not wear personal protective equipment (PPE). In an effort to improve motorcycle safety on the bases, Ms. Watson explained that all riders must have a Class M license, insurance, inspection sticker, and wear PPE as recommended by Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF). She stressed that all soldiers are required to complete a Basic Rider Course (BRC) and, depending on the type of bike they own, must complete either a Military Sport Bike Rider Course (MSRC) or Experienced Rider Course (ERC) within 60 days of completing the BRC or purchasing the motorcycle. Additionally, riders must complete the appropriate advanced riding course every three years to be in compliance with the training requirements. She stated that all military bases offer riding courses free of charge so soldiers have no legitimate excuse for not obtaining the required training. She also stressed that failure to comply with any of the military administrative or training requirements could result in very severe consequences for the soldier.





Law Enforcement Initiatives to Improve Motorcycle Safety



Senior Patrol Officer Chantal Locke, a motor officer with the Austin Police Department (APD), discussed the results of the Department's S.M.A.R.T. initiative to increase motorist awareness of motorcycles and promote motorcycle safety in the Austin area. S.M.A.R.T. stands for **S**afety Equipment & Protection, **M**otorcycle License and Endorsement, **A**wareness (alert and aware), **R**esponsible (riding sober), and **T**raffic Laws (obey them). Officer Locke shared the good news that motorcycle deaths in Austin were down over the previous year and was cautiously optimistic that continued efforts would produce further decreases this year. APD's S.M.A.R.T. program, modeled after a similar initiative conducted by the Arlington Police Department, focuses on motorist awareness as well as rider responsibilities, to help reduce motorcyclist crash risk. The initiative included additional patrol officers assigned during the month of May and around the time of the Republic of Texas (ROT) Rally to watch for motorists driving aggressively around motorcycles, and for motorcyclists riding in an unsafe manner. Chantal found that while working with neighboring law enforcement agencies during traffic enforcement, some officers were not familiar with motorcycle-specific traffic laws. This initiative provided an opportunity to increase awareness of these laws among participating officers. Officer Locke recognized the significance of law enforcement's participation in helping to reduce motorcycle fatalities and injuries, but stressed the importance of having judicial support in the courtroom as well.

Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Report

David Die, chairman of the TMSC, provided an update on the TMSC's activities since the last forum. Mr. Die acknowledged Mr. Troy Walden for his work serving as the previous Chairman, and Patricia Turner for her relentless efforts in helping to improve motorcycle safety in Texas. He encouraged attendees to become members of the TMSC; sharing that members include people from a variety of backgrounds, including government, motorcycle groups, individual riders, and law enforcement. David stressed that the TMSC has people who work diligently to improve motorcycle safety in Texas and that new members have the





opportunity to share new ideas and bring renewed energy. He shared that the Board finalized and adopted bylaws, developed a preliminary assessment of motorcycle safety in Texas, and established standing committees to work on strategies for improving motorcycle safety outlined in the assessment. David introduced the TMSC standing committee chairs and asked each to share committee activities with forum participants.

Jude Schexnyder stated that the Education Standing Committee held a preliminary meeting and identified various avenues for improving motorcycle safety through education efforts. The standing committee proposes updating and expanding rider education curriculum, conducting a Texas crash causation study, integrating motorcycle safety into driver education, increasing the distribution of the “Share the Road” video, establishing professional development workshops for motorcycle safety instructors, promoting continuous looping traffic safety messages in driver license offices, and using “Look. Learn. Live.” website for additional educational outreach.

Cathy “Pegasus” Bochat-Duross, chair of the Safety & Awareness Standing Committee, stressed that change does not occur overnight and emphasized the need for continuing productive, non-confrontational dialogue. She urged attendees to join a standing committee because the more people that get involved the quicker change will come.

Closing Remarks

Jim Hollis, of TxDOT’s Traffic Safety Program, thanked everyone for participating and shared that interest in motorcycle safety has grown exponentially over the past decade. Jim acknowledged that coordination and communication between motorcyclists and state agencies may have been lacking in the past, but that partnerships have been established, and continue to strengthen, because of today’s and previous forums. He acknowledged that we must continue to work together to achieve a common goal – to decrease motorcycle injuries and deaths in Texas. Mr. Hollis encouraged continuing future forums to exchange ideas and continue progress toward achieving that goal.



Forum Feedback

A total of 36 attendees provided feedback about the forum. Most agreed that the forum provided some knowledge about motorcycle safety issues in Texas, and that they gained new knowledge about efforts to address motorcycle safety in the state. The majority of respondents rated each



presentation as “good” or “excellent.” Several respondents felt the majority of information presented was helpful, but the presentation on SB 1967 was particularly interesting.

Several suggested topics for upcoming forums such as motorist awareness, legislative issues involving motorcyclists, and improving relationships between law enforcement and riders. Although feedback was mostly positive, recommendations for improvements include providing more time for open discussion after presentations, and increased marketing of the event to attract more diverse rider groups.

APPENDIX A:
FORUM AGENDA

AGENDA

Thursday, February 11, 2010
Brown Distributing Company, Hospitality Room
8711 Johnny Morris Road
Austin, TX

Participating Agencies:



- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 10:00 – 10:20 am | Opening Remarks
Terry Pence, Director , Traffic Safety Section, Texas Department of Transportation

Quinn Brackett , Center for Transportation Safety (CTS), Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) |
| 10:20 – 10:40 am | SB 1967: Motorcycle Safety Bill
Terri Williams , Secretary, Texas Motorcycle Rights Association (TMRA2) |
| 10:40 – 11:00 am | Motorcycle Safety Training Update
John Young , Coordinator, Motorcycle Safety Unit, Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS) |
| 11:00 – 11:20 am | TxDOT's "Share the Road" Decal Program
Gonzalo Ponce , Program Manager, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) |
| 11:20 – 11:40 am | Motorcyclist Safety and Awareness
Butterfly , State Safety & Awareness Liaison, Texas Confederation of Clubs |
| 11:40 – 12:00 pm | Update on Statewide Motorcyclist Safety and Awareness Campaign
Patricia Turner , Associate Research Scientist, CTS, TTI |
| 12:00 – 1:00 pm | Lunch |

SPECIAL THANKS TO BROWN DISTRIBUTING, INC.



AGENDA (CONT'D)

- 1:00 – 1:20 pm** ***Working with Your Safe Community Coalition to Improve Motorcycle Safety***
Irene Rodriguez, Associate Research Specialist and Safe Communities Coordinator, CTS, TTI
- 1:20 – 1:40 pm** ***Combating Motorcyclist Deaths: A Top Priority for the Military***
Erin Watson, Naval Motorcycle Safety Program, United States Safety Program
- 1:40 – 2:00 pm** ***Law Enforcement Initiatives to Improve Motorcycle Safety***
Senior Patrol Officer Chantal Locke, Austin Police Department
- 2:00 – 2:10 pm** ***Texas Motorcycle Safety Coalition Report***
David Die, TMSC Chair
- 2:10 – 2:30 pm** ***TMSC Standing Committees & Chairs***
- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Policy & Bylaws | Ray Brockie |
| Legislation | Terri Williams |
| Safety Awareness | Cathy Bochat-Duross |
| Education | Jude Schexnyder |
| Research | Jeff Kaufman |
| Resolutions | Keith Rovell |
| Nominations | Jim Stanford |
| Roadway Eng & Design | David Die |
- 2:30 – 2:45 pm** ***Open Discussion***
- 2:45 – 3:00 pm** ***Closing Remarks***

APPENDIX B:
FORUM FEEDBACK FORM



Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum 2010

FEEDBACK FORM

Please check the appropriate box.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. This forum provided me with knowledge of the motorcycle safety concerns in our state.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The participant materials (presentations, handouts, etc.) will be useful to me in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I gained new knowledge about what is being done to address motorcycle safety in our state.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The forum's current format is an effective way to exchange information and ideas for improving motorcycle safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please check the appropriate box.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
5. SB1967: Motorcycle Safety Bill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Texas Motorcycle Safety Training Update	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. TxDOT's "Share the Road" Decal Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Motorcyclist Safety and Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Update on Statewide Motorcyclist Safety and Awareness Campaign	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Working with Your Safe Communities Coalition to Improve Motorcycle Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Combating Motorcyclist Deaths: A Top Priority for the Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Law Enforcement Initiatives to Improve Motorcycle Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



13. What topics would you suggest for future forums?

14. What part of the forum was MOST beneficial to you?

15. What part of the forum was LEAST beneficial to you?

16. How could we improve the Texas Motorcycle Safety Forum?

Additional Comments:
